

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 611
TO BE ANSWERED ON 22.07.2026**

PUNCTUALITY AND CATERING SERVICES IN RAILWAYS

611. SMT. SHAMBHAVI:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government tracks the high rate of delays and poor punctuality in ordinary passenger and express trains that severely disrupt the daily schedules of small traders and common commuters, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;**
- (b) the average punctuality percentage recorded for non-premium express trains during the last two quarters of 2026;**
- (c) whether IRCTC is strictly enforcing the mandatory display of standardised, fixed rate-cards to stop private catering vendors from illegally overcharging passengers for meals and water bottles in running trains, if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor;**
- (d) the number of financial fines levied/vendor catering contracts cancelled for overpricing/supplying unhygienic food items in 2025-26; and**
- (e) the steps taken/being taken by the Government to install digital QR-code payment stickers across all pantry carts?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF RAILWAYS, INFORMATION & BROADCASTING AND
ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

(SHRI ASHWINI VAISHNAW)

(a) and (b) Punctuality is accorded high priority on Indian Railways (IR) and all possible efforts are made to run trains on time. However, on Indian Railways, several factors affect punctuality which include foggy weather, path constraints, asset maintenance and other issues, alarm chain pulling, agitations, cattle run over and other unforeseen circumstances.

The average punctuality of Mail/Express trains during the 1st quarter of 2026 (i.e. January-March) was 75.05% and that during the 2nd quarter (i.e. April-June) was 75.76%.

The overall punctuality of trains (including all Mail/Express, Vande Bharat Express, Rajdhani Express, Shtabadi Express etc.) on Indian Railways during 2026-27 (April to June) was 76.32%.

The steps taken to improve punctuality of train services include:

- **Regular, continuous and real-time monitoring of punctuality of trains using technological tools and IT systems.**
- **Use of an integrated digital platform for monitoring of train operations comprising Integrated Coaching Management System (ICMS) and Control Office Application (COA) which are integrated with National Train Enquiry System (NTES).**
- **Progressive advancement for automatic uptake of timings by the train movement itself, is being achieved through GPS devices fitted locomotives {Real-Time Train Information System (RTIS) and Remote Monitoring and Management of Locomotives and Trains (REMMLOT)} and Data loggers integrated with the station signaling system.**
- **Data loggers ensure real time and realistic reporting of arrival / departure of passenger trains at stations.**
- **IR has been replacing conventional coaches (ICF coaches) by modern light weight LHB coaches having state-of-the art technology. The Production units of Indian Railways are producing only LHB coaches from April 2018 onwards. The production of LHB coaches has continually increased during the years and about 50,000 LHB coaches have been turned out since 2014. IR has also been proliferating Vande Bharat, Namo Bharat Rapid Rail and Amrit Bharat trains, for quick acceleration and deceleration.**

- **To improve punctuality, IR also undertakes rationalisation of time tables. One such exercise, in a scientific manner, was undertaken with the assistance of IIT- Mumbai using their traffic simulator. The exercise also aimed at provisioning of fixed Integrated Maintenance blocks on all sections to minimise detention and improve punctuality.**
- **New generation High capacity Locomotives are being utilised for Right powering of trains.**
- **Further, with a view to minimise and mitigate the effect of fog and to assist the Loco Pilots run the train during foggy weather conditions the following steps have been taken by Indian Railways:**

(i) GPS based FOG SAFE DEVICE – A Global Positioning System (GPS) based portable 'Fog Safe Device' (FSD) is being provided to Loco Pilots, which displays upcoming critical landmarks such as approaching signal, level crossing gates, permanent speed restrictions etc. in advance during poor visibility conditions like fog. This device is used for safe train operation especially during winter season and to help reduce stress on Loco Pilots while running in poor visibility conditions. As on 30.04.2026, there are 32,748 Fog Safe devices available over Indian Railways.

(ii) Modified Semi-Automatic Stop Signal (MASS) System: MASS has been introduced on the Automatic Signalling territory during abnormal conditions like Fog & Bad Weather impairing visibility. The system helps minimise delay in train operation during foggy weather conditions.

Train operation during fog and poor visibility conditions is an essential component of the training curriculum and the same has already been incorporated in the Transportation Module and Technical Module of the prescribed training syllabus for Loco Pilots (LPs) and Assistant Loco Pilots (ALPs).

Results/Outcomes:

Due to these initiatives, Indian railways, during 2025-26 recorded an overall punctuality of more than 77%.

No. of Zones	Punctuality percentage
3	Punctuality of more than 90%
09	Punctuality between 75% and 90%
All Zones of Indian Railways	77%

(c) to (e) Indian Railways serve nearly 60 cr meals every year on average in trains and on an average about 0.002% complaints are received. Based on inquiry on these complaints during the last three years, an overall fine of Rs 56 cr has been imposed.

Passenger complaints related to quality and hygiene in trains are handled by IRCTC promptly and appropriate punitive action is taken against the service providers for deficiency in service as per contract agreement. IRCTC publishes the debarment list on its official website.

Indian Railways continuously endeavour to provide good quality and hygienic food items to the travelling passengers as per the prescribed norms. Necessary steps are accordingly taken by Indian Railways from time to time to ensure the same.

The following measures have been taken to improve quality, hygiene and food safety:

- Supply of meals from designated Base Kitchens.**
- Commissioning of modern Base Kitchens at identified locations.**
- Installation of CCTV Cameras in Base Kitchens for better monitoring of food preparation.**
- Shortlisting and use of popular and branded raw materials, like cooking oil, atta, rice, pulses, masala items, paneer, dairy products etc. for food production.**

- **Deployment of Food Safety Supervisors at Base Kitchens to monitor food safety and hygienic practices.**
- **Deployment of on-board IRCTC supervisors on trains.**
- **Introduction of QR codes on meal packets supplied in trains to enhance food safety, transparency and passenger awareness. The QR code provides complete PLM (Packing, Labelling and Marking) information including Maximum Retail Price (MRP), date and time of packing, name of the licensee and FSSAI license number, enabling passengers to verify food details easily**
- **Regular deep cleaning and periodical pest control in Base Kitchens and Pantry Cars.**
- **In order to ensure compliance with Food Safety Norms, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) certification from designated Food Safety Officers of each catering unit has been made mandatory.**
- **Regular food sampling as a part of the inspection and monitoring mechanism to ensure quality of food on trains.**
- **Third Party Audit is done to examine hygiene and quality of food in Pantry Cars and Base Kitchens. Customer satisfaction survey is also conducted.**
- **Regular and surprise inspections by Railway/ IRCTC officials, including Food Safety Officers.**
- **Regular training is conducted by IRCTC to enhance the skills of catering staff, focusing on customer service areas i.e., communication, courteous behaviour, service standards, personal grooming, and hygiene.**

Following measures have been taken to improve onboard cleanliness:

- **Mechanized Coach Cleaning is undertaken during primary maintenance.**

- **On-Board Housekeeping Services (OBHS) are provided for en-route cleaning and grievance redressal.**
- **Clean Train Station (CTS) services ensure mechanized cleaning of coaches, including toilets, during scheduled stoppages.**
- **Engagement of professional and technology-enabled service providers for sustained improvements in cleanliness and passenger services.**
- **All passenger coaches have been installed with bio-toilets so that no human waste is discharged from coaches on the track resulting in improved cleanliness level. The details of provision of bio toilets are as under:**

Period	Number of Bio-Toilet fitted
2004-2014	9,587
2014- Till June 2026	3,73,577
